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Bristol Resource Recovery Facility Operating Committee

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Berlin -
Denise McNair
Town Manager
(Treasurer)

Branford -
Anthony DaRos
First Selectman
(Secretary)

Bristol -
Arthur Ward
Mayor
(President)

Burlington -
Theodore Shafer
First Selectman

Hartland -
Wade Cole
First Selectman

New Britain -
Timothy O'Brien
Mayor

Plainville -
Robert Lee
Town Manager

Plymouth -
Vincent Festa
Mayor

Prospect -
Robert Chatfield
Mayor

Seymour -
W. Kurt Miller
First Selectman

Southington -
Garry Brumback
Town Manager

Warren -
Jack Travers
First Selectman

Washington -
Mark Lyon
First Selectman

Wolcott -
Thomas Dunn
Mayor
(Vice President)

Testimony of the Bristol Resource Recovery Facility Operating Committee to the Planning and Development Committee March 21, 2012

Proposed H.B. No. 5540

AN ACT TRANSFERRING CERTAIN POWERS OF THE BRISTOL RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY OPERATING COMMITTEE TO THE [WEST CENTRAL CONNECTICUT SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING BOARD]

Good morning Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile and Members of the Planning and Development Committee. My name is Thomas Dunn and I am the Mayor of Wolcott and Vice President; and I am joined today by Denise McNair, Town Manager of Berlin and Treasurer and Jonathan Bilmes, Executive Director. We are representing the Bristol Resource Recovery Facility Operating Committee, made up of 14 towns and cities in Connecticut representing over 10% of the state's population. We are concerned with the safe, environmental and cost-effective disposal of municipal solid waste and recyclables. In addition, since our Board is comprised of Mayors, Selectmen and Town Managers, we also represent the direct interests of our taxpayers, both residential and commercial. On behalf of the Bristol Resource Recovery Facility Operating Committee, we are presenting written testimony supporting Proposed House Bill No. 5540, AN ACT TRANSFERRING CERTAIN POWERS OF THE BRISTOL RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY OPERATING COMMITTEE TO THE [WEST CENTRAL CONNECTICUT SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING BOARD], but we are requesting that you modify the language in a number of areas as outlined in the document attached to this statement.

At present, the contracting municipalities of the Bristol Resource Recovery Facility Operating Committee ("BRRFOC") receive long-term solid waste disposal services through their membership in BRRFOC, and the vast majority of such municipalities also receive long-term recycling services through their membership in a sister organization known as the Tunxis Recycling Operating Committee ("TROC"). The inter-community agreements supporting these arrangements were adopted over 20 years ago and need to be updated to allow us to plan for the future and facilitate our ability to meet new solid waste disposal challenges, including cost-effective compliance with the state's solid waste management plan.

The reasons the region created two Operating Committees are no longer valid and inconsistent with waste management practices nationwide. The existing inter-community agreements do not provide a sufficiently durable platform to support stable, long term answers to the problem of safe waste disposal and recycling. A governance structure that integrates recycling and waste disposal options and allows for long term existence will enable our communities to evaluate a variety of waste disposal options so that we can select the most efficient, environmentally safe and economical path. As our communities look ahead to the next generation of long term solid waste solutions, we need the robust legal structure provided by this legislation.

To streamline operations, BRRFOC and TROC are consolidating their respective functions through the establishment of a joint solid waste and recycling board created under Section 7-339b of the State's Interlocal Agreement Statute. It is anticipated that most of the current BRRFOC and TROC contracting municipalities will choose to adopt the interlocal agreement making them participants in the new board structure.

Under Special Act 92-25, as amended, BRRFOC currently possesses detailed bonding powers, which it last exercised through the issuance of \$41,920,000 Solid Waste Revenue Refunding Bonds on April 7, 2005 (the "2005 BRRFOC Bonds"). The 2005 BRRFOC Bonds will be retired on July 1, 2014. Special Act 92-25, as amended, also gives BRRFOC the powers afforded to a regional resource recovery authority under Section 7-273bb(a) of the General Statutes.

The purpose of this act is to transfer the bonding and regional resource recovery powers of BRRFOC under Special Act 92-25, as amended, to the new board, which will have powers comparable to other regional solid waste authorities. The transfer will occur when the new board has been fully established and the 2005 BRRFOC Bonds have been retired.

We are working on an appropriate name for the new board that properly reflects the region's mission and goals. As soon as we have that name, we will ask you to amend this bill with the new name and the enclosed technical corrections.